Further, 890 Kms of various stretches on National Highways in Bihar have been proposed for upgradation under National Highways Development Project (Phase-III) to be implemented by National Highways Authority of India on Built Operate and Transfer (BOT) basis. Aparts from this, various stretches of National Highways have been idetified for improvement and included in the Annual Plan 2005-06 in consultation with the Road construction Department of Bihar. The allocation of funds for the year 2005-06 will depend on the requirement, *inter se* priority and availability of funds.

Boosting of Maritime Sector

3835. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 10 year action plan has been drawn up to boost the maritime sector which, reportedly, includes development of national sea waterways and setting up of a Directorate of Ports to supervise to development of ports; and

(b) if so, the details of the plan and its present status?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) Declaration of port channels as National Sea Waterways in a phased manner beginning with major ports and their development and maintenance through the Government of India funding as also constitution of a Directorate General of Ports are envisaged in the draft Policy for the Maritime Sector (Ports, Merchant Shipping and Inland Water Transport).

Concurrently, the Government as also taken up preparation of the National Maritime Development Programme which would include specific schemes and projects to be taken up over a period of next 10 years. The total investment in the proposed Programme is estimated to be Rs. 1,00,000 crores. The programme is proposed to be implemented through public private partnership. Public investments are planned primarily for creation of common user infrastructure facilities. Private investments are expected in the areas where operations are primarily commercial in nature.

Expansion of Chennai Port

3836. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state: